Washington State Ferries
Long-Range Strategic Plan

Tuesday, June 7, 2005
South Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting
6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
John Sedgwick Junior High School
8995 SE Sedgwick Road, Port Orchard

Washington State Department of Transportation

Washington State Ferries

Your Ferry Future...

Planning now for 2011-2030

Introduction

Purpose of Tonight's Meeting

- Share information on key challenges facing WSF – ridership growth, terminal and vessel capacity constraints, boat waiting times, roadway traffic impacts, financial constraints.
- Discuss specific service choices for addressing key chokepoints and bottlenecks.
- Answer questions and obtain input on the strategic choices.

Why is WSF Updating its Long-Range Strategic Plan?

- WSF's last Plan was completed in 1999 – much has changed since, including the Legislature's implementation of the I-695 funding cuts, which significantly reduced funding for WSF operations.
- The Ferries are already full on many sailings and more growth is coming.
- The System has aging vessels and terminals which need upgrading just to keep pace with current demand.
- WSF must determine how to best serve the public given all of the System's needs and limited financial resources.
- Communities' plans, and WSF's plans for service and investments, are related.

Why Do We Need a Plan?

The WSF Plan will become a part of the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), scheduled for adoption by the end of 2005. The WTP is required by state law, and will form the basis for setting the state transportation system's investment priorities.

Why Plan Now for 2011 and Beyond?

Ferry service improvements take time to implement. Because of long lead times required for building new vessels and improving terminals, and the long-term nature of such investments, WSF is planning now for the service it will provide in 2011-2030.

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Purpose and Scope of Plan

When Will the Plan Take Effect, and What Will it Do?

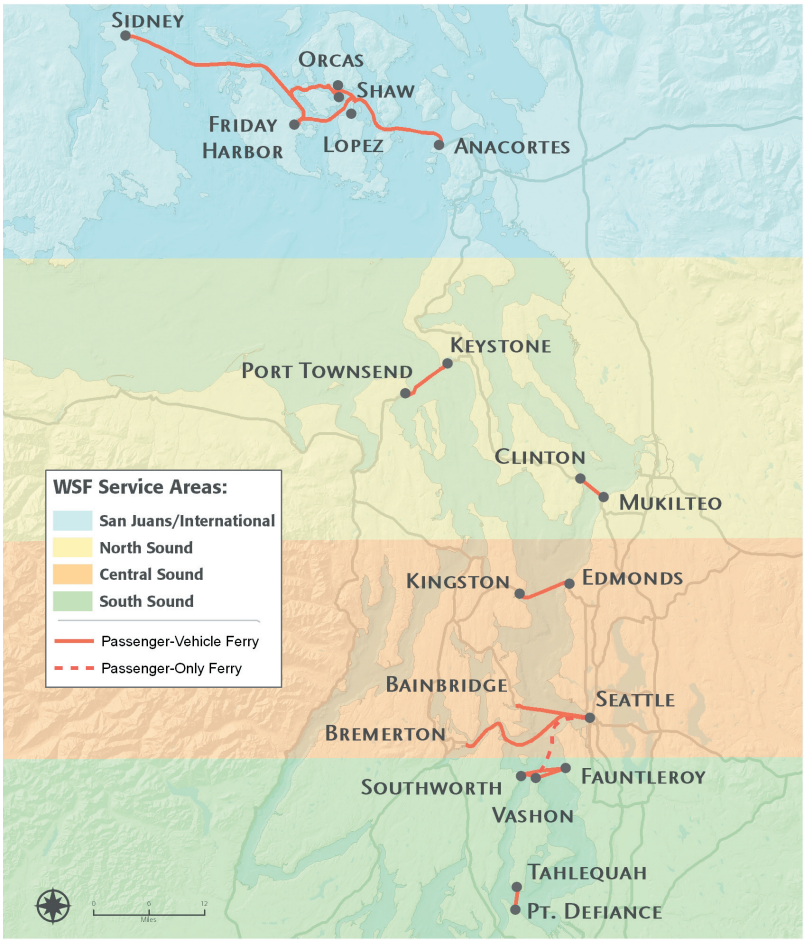
When the Plan is completed in December 2005, it will guide future WSF decisions on services and investments:

- **Services:** it will have a route-specific program including route structures, frequencies and carrying capacities.
- **Investments:** it serves as a 25-year strategic investment plan for vessel and terminal improvements.

WSF is making investments now in vessels and terminals, based on its current Capital Program.

- New vessels have been ordered to replace older vessels that are being retired.
- Preservation work and improvements are being planned for terminals at Anacortes, Bainbridge Island, Port Townsend and Mukilteo, on varying schedules beginning in 2005.
- The Eagle Harbor Maintenance facility requires major repairs to continue efficient upkeep of WSF vessels and terminals. Construction will run from mid-2005 through mid-2009.

Washington State Ferries Routes by Service Area



Key Constraints

Multiple Constraints Affect WSF's Ability to Handle Growth

WSF is a Financially Constrained System

- Significant limits on its financial resources require WSF to look closely at the operating and capital costs of any possible choice.

Systemwide Chokepoints and Bottlenecks Constrain WSF's Capacity and Efficiency

- **Fauntleroy Terminal:** Operates at capacity now and is not able to accommodate projected growth in demand from Vashon/Southworth. Expanding the terminal is not an option, according to the City of Seattle.
- **Colman Dock** in downtown Seattle is a hub for the system. WSF is studying options for a new facility on the site to improve operating efficiencies and accommodate increasing demand.
- **Central Sound Passenger Service:** High growth in passenger demand is expected on Central Sound routes.
- **Weekends/Summer Season:** Continuing growth in the recreational travel market on weekends and during the summer on Edmonds-Kingston, Whidbey Island routes and Anacortes-San Juan Islands routes presents capacity challenges in those corridors.
- **San Juan Islands** terminal constraints include one-slip terminals in the Islands and the limited ability of adjacent road systems to handle ferry traffic.

Landside Constraints are Major Factors

- Traffic congestion issues in downtown Seattle and at Fauntleroy will be major issues for the City of Seattle.
- SR 305 on Bainbridge Island has significant capacity and congestion issues that will be considered in the Plan.
- Impacts of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge are also considered.
- Single-slip and single-lane loading at the San Juan Islands Terminals.
- Multimodal terminals at Anacortes, Edmonds, and Mukilteo are being designed to mitigate many of the current landside impacts on these communities.

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Growth in Ridership

Systemwide Growth Expectations

- WSF's "baseline" growth projections rely on certain assumptions about service and fares:
  - Service levels are assumed to be the same as today's, except for the introduction of replacement vessels already planned.
  - Fares are assumed to continue increasing 5% per year through 2009, with annual increases to match inflation thereafter.
- Given those assumptions, significant growth in ferry ridership is projected through 2030.
  - Westbound vehicle traffic during the evening commute period is projected to rise 24% (1629 additional vehicles) by 2030.
  - Westbound total ridership during the evening commute period is projected to rise 64% (11,015 additional passengers) by 2030.

What do ridership projections take into account?

WSF's projections of future ridership are based on a regional computer model developed by the Puget Sound Regional Council. It includes origin and destination information for all cross-Sound trips, based on population and employment projections. Projections about commuters' decisions also take into account a variety of factors including vessel capacities, driving times and fares.

Historical Context of Systemwide Growth

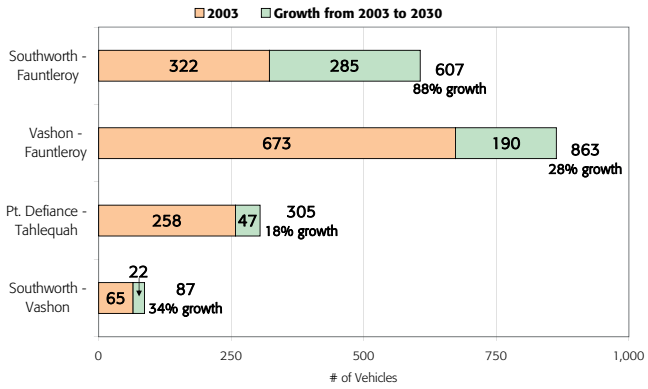
- Between 1987 and 1999, systemwide ferry ridership grew by approximately 50%, as a result of population growth and relatively flat fare levels (fares declined in inflation-adjusted terms.)
- Since 1999, ridership has declined about 10% throughout the system, a result of a regional economic downturn and of the service reductions and fare increases that followed voter approval of the tax limits in Initiative 695.
- As of 2004, systemwide ridership was at a similar level as in 1995.
- Future population growth west of Puget Sound is expected to increase demand for ferry service.

Growth in the South Sound

- Growth on the South Sound routes is projected to be especially high, as a result of population and economic growth in Kitsap County. Total peak-period traffic on South Sound routes is projected to rise 41% for vehicles and 62% for passengers, by 2030.

South Sound Vehicles in 2003 and Projected 2030

4-Hour PM Westbound Commuting Peak



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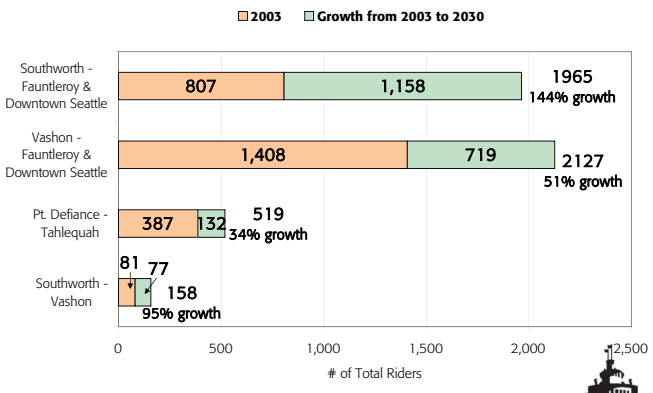


South Sound Corridor

Challenges and Choices

Situation Assessment and Key Challenge

- The key challenge for WSF in the South Sound Corridor will be accommodating ridership from Southworth and the north end of Vashon Island to downtown Seattle.
  - Fauntleroy Terminal is nearly at capacity during peak periods and cannot be expanded.
  - Demand analysis shows that Fauntleroy vehicle traffic will increase by 48% (475 vehicles during the 4-hour peak commute period) by 2030.
- Traffic on the Southworth-Vashon part of the route will not exceed the capacity of the route's current vessels through 2030.
- Currently planned vessel up-sizing on the Point Defiance-Tahlequah part of the route to an Evergreen State class sized vessel will be adequate to serve projected ridership growth through 2030.

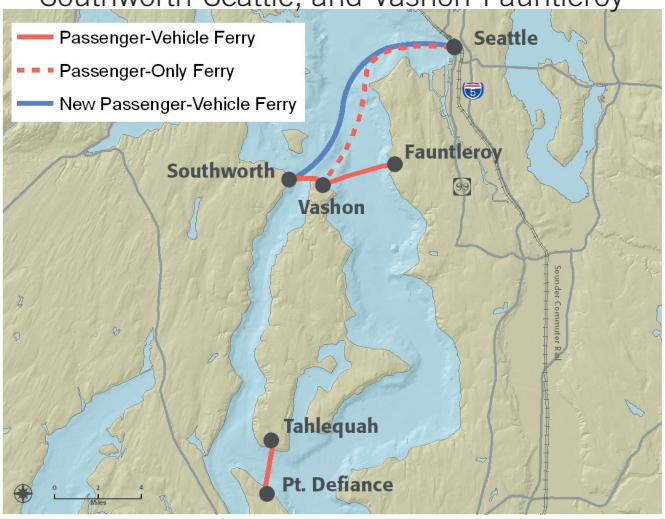
Choices Evaluated for Addressing Growth in Demand

Is there a way to avoid the Fauntleroy congestion problem by adding service outside of the South Sound to draw Fauntleroy traffic away?

No. Adding a third boat on the Bremerton route reduces 2030 Fauntleroy traffic by only 125 vehicles. Adding a Seattle-Southworth passenger-only service draws a significant number of walk-ons, but reduces 2030 Fauntleroy car traffic by only 34 vehicles.

Current South Sound Route Structure:
Triangle Passenger-Vehicle Service to Fauntleroy and Seattle-Vashon Passenger-Only Service

Potential Service Choice:
Break up the Triangle, provide direct passenger-vehicle service between Southworth-Vashon, Southworth-Seattle, and Vashon-Fauntleroy



Choice #1: Reconfigure South Sound Service by Redirecting the Southworth Route

Creating a Southworth-Seattle passenger-vehicle route is the most promising choice to address constraints at Fauntleroy dock:

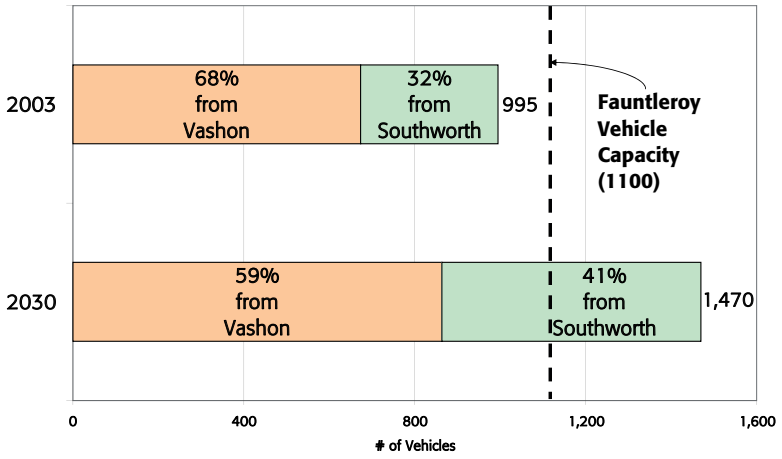
- Reduces vehicle traffic at Fauntleroy (826 peak period vehicles by 2030 vs. 995 today).
- Greater convenience for Southworth riders. Average total trip time for Southworth riders would be 21% shorter (30 minutes); 64% of all Southworth trips would have a shorter total trip.
- Total South Sound vehicle capacity would increase by 33%, with capacity added where it is most needed - between Vashon-Fauntleroy and Southworth-Seattle.
- Operating costs under this choice would be 44% higher than existing service, but this choice is the least expensive of any of the reconfigured service choices that solve the Fauntleroy problem.

Implications of Developing a New Southworth-Seattle Passenger-Vehicle Route

- Distribution of cross-Sound traffic between WSF and the Tacoma Narrows Bridge is projected to be unaffected by a new Southworth-Seattle route. Currently 24% of cross-sound vehicle trips use ferries, and the same ratio is projected for 2030 with a Southworth-Seattle route.
- The City of Seattle would need to support three ferry routes at Colman Dock. Reducing traffic through Fauntleroy by bringing direct vehicle service from Southworth to Seattle may be the best balance of impacts within the city.

Total Vehicles from Fauntleroy, 2003 & 2030

4-Hour PM Commuting Peak, Westbound,
No Service Changes



Choice #2: Reconfigure South Sound Service in Other Ways

Alternate Sailings from Southworth and/or Vashon between Downtown and Fauntleroy:

- Solves capacity problem at Fauntleroy only if both routes have alternate sailings.
- Results in less customer-friendly service, as alternating sailings would go to different destinations and the frequency of service between any two ports drops significantly, resulting in greater wait time between trips.

Close Fauntleroy and Redirect Both the Southworth and Vashon routes to Seattle:

- Eliminates pressure at Fauntleroy, but is a more expensive way to serve Vashon.
- Takes Vashon riders to downtown, giving more than 50% of the riders a longer total trip time.
- Would result in too many vessels trying to off-load at the same time at Colman Dock, raising waterfront integration and traffic challenges

What Will Happen Next With These Service Choices?

After examining demand for ferry service in the South Sound Corridor, and evaluating the above service choices to meet that demand within WSF's constrained system, one South Sound service choice appears at this time to be more promising than the others. WSF is seeking input on all of the choices (see next page), and will be carrying forward these findings, along with public comment, as a systemwide plan is drafted. Because different service choices can have different implications for the WSF system as a whole, the choices highlighted by the South Sound process may or may not appear as part of the recommended systemwide service plan in the draft Plan.

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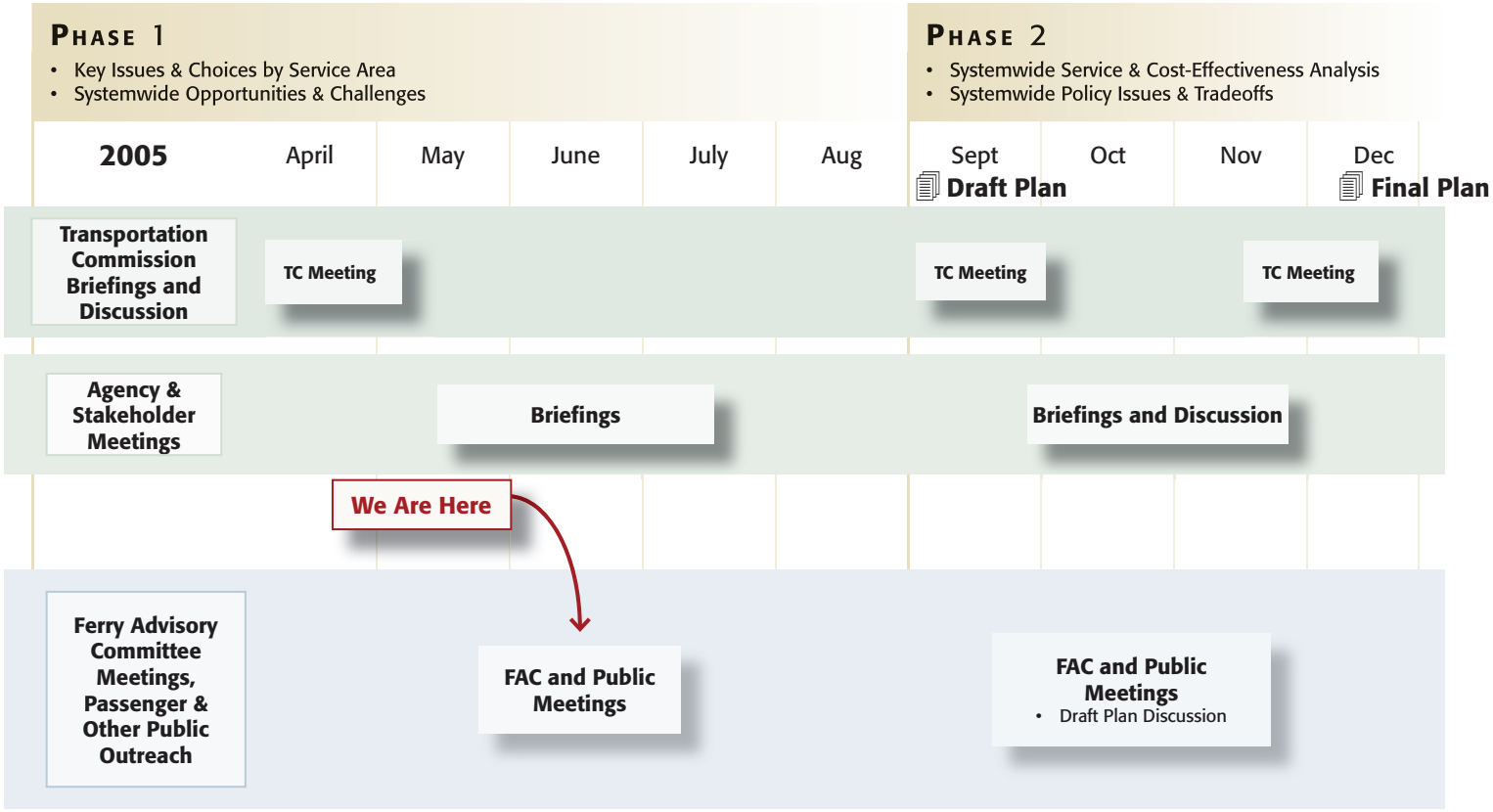
Scheduled Next Steps

Project Schedule and Opportunities for More Input



Next Steps

- Opportunity for comment on the Draft Plan in the fall
- Project updates will be available at

  http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/your_wsf/corporate_communications/LongRangePlan.htm
- E-mail questions and comments to wsfplanning@wsdot.wa.gov
- Questions by phone: 1-888-808-7977